

The type-locality of *Sturnella magna quinta* Dickerman, 1989: a correction to the original publication

by Leo Joseph

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After reviewing geographical variation in plumage and taxonomy of the South American populations of the Eastern Meadowlark *Sturnella magna*, Dickerman (1989) described a new subspecies, *S. m. quinta*, from Surinam and nearby parts of Brazil. The holotype of *S. m. quinta* is a specimen in the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), AMNH 237404, with type-locality given by Dickerman (*op. cit.*) as "Frechal, Rio Surumu, Amapá, Brazil".

A problem arises with the type-locality as so given. In Paynter & Traylor's (1991) ornithological gazetteer of Brazil, Frechal in the Brazilian State of Amapá was cited as "not located" and Dickerman (1989) was given as the only reference to this locality in ornithological literature. On the other hand, Paynter & Traylor (1991) noted that Frechal, also spelt Flexal, is at 03°50'N, 60°32'W in what is now the Brazilian State of Roraima. Having done field work in the latter area (Joseph 1992), I became interested in the discrepancy and resolved to check the locality data on the labels of the holotype and other AMNH specimens of *quinta* cited by Dickerman. The discrepancy is worth checking for several reasons. Most importantly, several subspecies and intermediate populations of *S. magna* occur in the region encompassing Roraima and Amapá in Brazil as well as in nearby Venezuela, Guyana, and Surinam. It is therefore important that the type-localities of all taxa named from this region, e.g., *S. m. quinta*, be clear. Further, Roraima and Amapá do not share common boundaries; nor does Roraima share a border with Surinam where most of the range of *quinta* occurs. Thus, if a locality called Frechal does exist in Amapá there is no possibility that it is one and the same locality as that in Roraima (e.g., located on a common border and sometimes given as being in one political region and sometimes in another).

In the AMNH collection, there are 11 specimens of *S. magna* collected on the Lee Garnett Day Expedition of 1927-28 and which were assigned by Dickerman to *S. m. quinta*. The locality and date data on seven of these specimens, AMNH 237400-237406 (i.e., including the holotype of *S. m. quinta*), are "Frechal, Rio Surumu, N.E. Brazil", collected between 4 and 15 September 1927. Similarly, for the remaining four, AMNH 237407-237410, the locality and date data are "Limão, Rio Cotinga, N.E. Brazil", collected on 30 September and 1 October 1927. Nowhere on the labels of any of these specimens does "Amapá" or, for that matter, "Roraima" occur.

In fact, there can be no doubt that these birds were collected in Roraima, not Amapá. Three sources should suffice to make this point. First, G.H.H. Tate, who led the Day Expedition, a main aim of which was to collect the avifauna of Mount Roraima, twice published maps of the route taken through the state of Roraima by the Expedition

(Tate 1930a, b). Curiously, Frechal was shown on neither of these and I have been unable to find reference to Flechal in the corresponding texts. On both maps, however, Tate showed the Rio Surumu, the Rio Cotinga and Limão. Second, Chapman (1931) noted that the Day Expedition approached Mount Roraima from the south by way of the Rio Branco, the entire course of which is in the state of Roraima. He also cited the same 11 specimens of *S. magna* and assigned them to *S. m. monticola*, the subspecies he noted as “occurring in the savannas at the southern base of Roraima and thence southward to the Rio Surumu”. Third, Gleason (1929) in a botanical report of the Day Expedition, at least twice referred to Frechal: on p. 394 (“Frechal, extreme northern Brazil” and again on p. 396 (“on the savanna at Frechal, south of Mt. Roraima, northern Brazil”).

As noted, I have been unable to find Frechal indicated on a map. Though a more exhaustive search might be more successful, it is worth noting in this regard that Gleason (*op. cit.*) cited the holotype of the plant *Bowchidia parvifolia* as having been collected at Frechal on 30 September 1927. That is the same date that the Expedition collected two of its four Limão specimens of *S. magna*. From this we can infer that Frechal and Limão are likely to be very close together and that this could be the reason why Tate showed Limão but not Frechal on his maps.

There remains the fact that Paynter & Traylor (1991) gave the coordinates of Frechal, Roraima as 3°50'N, 60°32'W. Their source was USBGN (1963). They did note that its identification is uncertain and that it may be the site bearing this name at 3°25'N, 60°19'W near the range known as the Serra do Flechal. All ornithological references they gave to the locality are ultimately based on specimens from the Lee Garnett Day expedition held in the AMNH.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that the holotype of *S. m. quinta* was collected at Frechal in Roraima and that there is no locality, at least in ornithological literature, known as Frechal in Amapá. The type-locality of *S. m. quinta* should therefore be emended to be Frechal, Rio Surumu, Roraima, Brazil. The further checking that is required to determine whether the name *S. m. quinta* can validly be applied to populations between and including Roraima and Amapá is beyond the scope of this note.

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Booby *Sula* colonies in the Mascarene area (Indian Ocean): extinctions, myths, and colour morphs

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In a recent discussion on the significance of the distribution of two colour morphs of the Red-footed Booby *Sula sula* in the western Indian Ocean, Le Corre (1999) claimed that all but three known colonies (some now extinct) consisted largely (80%+) of white morphs, amongst which he included Rodrigues, Mauritius and Agalega. The three exceptions cited were Europa (Mozambique Channel) and the Glorieuses (with 80+% white-tailed brown morphs = 'brown' hereafter), and Tromelin (33% brown). He inferred from this distribution that there was little mixing between the colonies with high proportions of brown morphs and those dominated by white morphs, unlike the situation in the Pacific Ocean. Earlier, Stoddart (1981) had also assumed that colonies without a specific reference to colour-morphs consisted largely of white birds, although in the standard work on the genus, Nelson (1978) was very cautious in interpreting colony records, and gave only very limited indications of Red-foot colour morph distribution in the Indian Ocean; he was apparently unaware of the colony on Europa. The Red-footed Booby populations on Rodrigues, Mauritius and Agalega cited by Le Corre are extinct or never existed. The only boobies of any kind still surviving are Masked Boobies *S. dactylatra* which still nest in small numbers on Serpent Island off Mauritius (Feare 1978, Safford 1993, Bell *et al.* 1994, pers. obs. 1999). The situation on each island, outlined below, is very different; all three are currently part of the Republic of Mauritius. Brief comments on St. Brandon (=Cargados Carajos) and Réunion are added.